

Libya threatens AWACS in Egypt

BEIRUT (R) — Libya Monday threatened to destroy U.S. Advanced Warning And Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft in Egyptian airspace saying it rejected Egypt's explanation that the radar planes were in the country for training purposes. A commentary by the Libyan news agency JANA said: "The pretext of (Egyptian President) Hosni Mubarak that Egyptians will train on these aircraft is completely rejected and cannot convince anyone." What is true is that the basic aim of calling in these planes is an aggressive act against Libya... Our people will reserve the right to destroy these planes any time it wishes, even if they are flying through Egyptian airspace itself." The commentary added that the presence in the region of what it called the "spy planes" created a state of tension which leads to the brink of war.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جورنال تايمز يوردان مؤسسة صحفية إسرائيلية "الراي"

Israeli army bus attacked in Tyre

TEL AVIV (R) — A bazooka rocket and automatic weapons were fired Monday at an Israeli army bus outside the South Lebanese coastal town of Tyre but missed, the Israeli military command said. Israeli troops were searching the area for the attackers, the military command said. Earlier Monday the army said sappers dismantled a big time bomb in the central square of Sidon, north of Tyre. It was the second bomb in the city in as many days. A 20 kilogramme device blew up Sunday but caused no casualties. A number of suspects were detained in Sidon, the army said.

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Bahrain calls for end to Gulf war

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain's ruler Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa Monday called on Iran and Iraq to end the 29-month-old Gulf war through negotiations. "Those who are being killed are neighbours, Muslims and brothers," he said in an interview with the Saudi newspaper Al Yaum, carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. Without elaborating, he said Bahrain was increasingly concerned over attempts by outside powers to destabilise the Gulf. In 1980 Bahrain said it had foiled an Iranian-backed attempt to overthrow the regime. Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa said Sunday night the Gulf countries regretted a recent statement by Syria, Libya and Iran which supported Iran. "We feel the Damascus statement did not help end the war," he said after a two-day meeting in Riyadh of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council.

High-level talks to end hijack of Libyan airliner

VALLETTA (R) — Prime Minister Dom Mintoff took charge of negotiations Monday with unidentified hijackers holding 161 passengers on board a Libyan airliner at Luqa Airport. But there was still no sign that an end to the 16-hour siege was near and no indication of why the aircraft had been hijacked during a domestic Libyan flight. The Boeing 727 was surrounded by armed police and soldiers and the runways and perimeter tracks were blocked by military and police vehicles to prevent any repeat of an abortive attempt to take off Sunday night.

Paris to try Moroccan on drug charges

PARIS (R) — A clerk at the Moroccan embassy in New Delhi will be charged in Paris with possessing 15 kilogrammes of heroin after being arrested at Charles de Gaulle airport on Friday, police said Monday. They named him as Miloudi Fares, a Moroccan citizen who was in transit from New Delhi to London. Police said the drug, with a street value of 15 million francs (\$2.2 million), was discovered in a briefcase.

Shchiransky may be released before term

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet dissident Anatoly Shchiransky could be released from prison before serving out his 13-year sentence on charges of espionage, the official news agency TASS said Monday. But it warned that "noisy propaganda campaigns" in the West would not help his case and bitterly condemned appeals for his freedom from Western leaders.

38 killed in Mexico train mishap

MEXICO CITY (R) — At least 38 people were killed and 79 injured when a passenger train and a freight train collided and caught fire in northwest Mexico, police said Monday. Rescue teams said more bodies were still pinned under overturned carriages. Police said some of the dead were burned beyond recognition in Sunday's crash near the city of Guaymas.

Libyan 'threat' to Sudan has receded, Shultz says

WASHINGTON (R) — Secretary of State George Shultz said Monday a Libyan "threat" to Sudan had receded and that Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi "is back in his box."

Mr. Shultz declined to confirm directly reports that the United States had recalled four AWACS reconnaissance planes sent to Egypt to monitor Libyan air movements alleged to be directed towards Sudan. But his remarks were a clear indication that the Reagan administration believed the problem had now eased. "As far as we know the threat that was clearly present has receded," Mr. Shultz said in a television interview. He said he did not want to give details but the result was "that the president of the United States acted quickly and decisively and effectively, and at least for the moment Qadhafi is back in his box where he belongs."

Earlier Monday the defence and state departments refused to confirm reports that the four Airborne Warning And Control System planes were being pulled back from Egypt. Meanwhile, Egypt admitted Monday for the first time that the AWACS were in the country, but it maintained they were here solely for training purposes. Defence Minister Mohammad Abdul Halim Abu Ghazala, asked by reporters about Washington reports that the planes would leave Egypt Tuesday after a mission to scan the Sudan-Libya border for signs of a Libyan military buildup, replied: "The AWACS will not leave Egypt before Egyptian pilots complete their training on them." "We shall decide the date on which the training finishes," he added. Last week Egyptian officials

contradicted a statement by President Reagan that U.S. and Egyptian forces were engaged in joint exercises. The officials said the Americans were training Egyptian pilots on electronic equipment used by the Hawkeye, a less-sophisticated reconnaissance aircraft which Egypt is buying. As tension built up in Khartoum and Washington over the reports of a Libyan threat to Sudan, Egypt insisted it had not asked for American help and said it saw no signs of crisis. The Washington Post said Monday the AWACS planes would be pulled out by midweek and that the U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz would return to its position off the Lebanese coast. The Nimitz had earlier been patrolling in international waters in the Mediterranean near Libya. But Sen. Henry Jackson, a Washington State Democrat and a member of the Armed Services Committee, said he expected the AWACS to be withdrawn from Egypt early this week unless there were new developments in the area.

The Post said the AWACS aircraft were dispatched at the request of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak after Egypt had told the United States it had uncovered a plot by Col. Qadhafi to assassinate Sudanese President Jaafar Numeiri and his top aides. Col. Qadhafi has denied Sudanese claims that Libya was massing troops, armour and aircraft near its border. Mr. Shultz said Col. Qadhafi had a long history of reprehensible behaviour and he expected the Libyan leader would continue to cause trouble. "Our approach, I think, is to let him see that his options are limited and we know what's going on, and to conduct ourselves accordingly," Mr. Shultz said. He said the United States would continue to oppose Libya's efforts to "destabilise" neighbouring countries. But he added: "The fact of the matter is that people are pretty well onto him... and so I think he has been pretty well contained and he'll continue to be so."

PNC preparing verdict on Reagan plan

ALGIERS (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders were reported arguing Monday at their parliament-in-exile over the wording of a final resolution expected to reject an American peace plan for the Middle East and endorse an Arab effort. Sources at the 384-member Palestine National Council (PNC), now in a second week of sometimes heated debates, said PLO hardliners wanted flat rejection of President Reagan's call early last September for a Palestinian homeland in association with Jordan in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. But, in a two-hour address Sunday night to a closed-door PNC political committee meeting PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasser Arafat insisted on a

more cautious stand. The commission meeting was held to draft the PLO's formal reply to all peace initiatives put forward after last year's Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The sources said Mr. Arafat wanted the PNC merely to say that the Reagan plan, already rejected by Israel, did not meet the Palestinian people's desire for statehood under PLO leadership. They said he also called for a clear endorsement of an Arab plan, adopted at an Arab League summit in the Moroccan city of Fez in mid-September. The hardliners, who have expressed reservations about this effort, were seeking to link the Fez plan with a continuation of the PLO's armed struggle. The plan has been widely interpreted as granting Israel indirect

recognition within its pre-1967 borders in exchange for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. The U.S. has asked the PLO to recognise Israel as the price for talking to the organisation. The PNC was expected to give Mr. Arafat room to manoeuvre in his cautious diplomatic approach to Middle East peace. According to a close Arafat aide, non-implementation of the Fez plan would drag the region again "into the turmoil of war." On Sunday night a PLO spokesman predicted the PNC would endorse the Fez proposal as it now stood. He added that those hardliners who were free to leave the PLO's Executive Committee. This appeared to be a warning

to pro-Libyan Ahmad Jibril, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), who wholly rejected the Fez plan as a "step backwards" in a speech to the PNC last week. The PNC meeting was also expected to decide to maintain PLO contacts with the Egyptian government despite hardline hostility. A PLO spokesman said. Any meeting between Mr. Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak would depend on these contacts, he added. PLO sources said the PNC would shortly reshuffle the PLO's Executive Committee, but that Mr. Arafat would continue to be its chairman. The PNC session is expected to end on Wednesday after sitting for 10 days.

Cheysson meets Andropov, Gromyko

MOSCOW (R) — French External Relations Minister Claude Cheysson met Soviet leader Yuri Andropov and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko for nearly one-and-a-half hours Monday before ending a visit to Moscow. Mr. Cheysson made no statement before leaving for Brussels and gave no details of his talks in the Kremlin. But the official news agency TASS said the two sides had discussed ways of increasing security and cooperation in Europe, "including proposals of the Soviet Union for cutting medium-range

nuclear weapons on the basis of parity." The French minister, who arrived in the Soviet Union last Wednesday, made clear in talks with Mr. Gromyko on Thursday and Friday that he and his hosts disagreed about the nuclear balance in Europe. TASS said Mr. Cheysson delivered a message to Mr. Andropov Monday from French President Francois Mitterrand. The agency gave no details of its contents but said that at Monday's talks both sides expressed the conviction there were real possibilities for

further development of Franco-Soviet relations. The Soviet Union has proposed that its medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe be reduced to the level of those of Britain and France combined. But Mr. Cheysson reaffirmed at a press conference last week that his country's nuclear deterrent could not be a subject for discussion at Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva on medium-range weapons systems. He said the nuclear balance in Europe was upset by Soviet SS-20 missiles and it had to be restored.

U.K. Labour puts on show of strength

LONDON (R) — Britain's opposition Labour Party put on a show of strength Monday in a campaign for an important by-election where surveys of voting intentions showed its left-wing candidate Peter Tatchell facing a close fight. London's Docklands district of Bermondsey, a Labour bastion for 50 years, is moving towards the centrist Liberal-Social Democratic alliance, according to the latest returns from doorstep canvassing ahead of Thursday's ballot. Labour spokesman David Fryer suggested at a news conference that the returns showed Mr. Tatchell to be now fewer than 2,000 votes ahead.

The alliance said the margin between Mr. Tatchell and his candidate, Liberal Simon Hughes, was two percentage points. Veteran Labour Member of Parliament Robert Mellish, who won the 1979 general election in

Bermondsey with a majority of 11,756, caused the by-election by resigning from the party in protest at the increasing influence of its militant left wing. Labour predicted the Liberals would finish close in the Bermondsey by-election but said the difference between the two top finishers would not be less than 1,000 votes. "They will not be anywhere near us. Close is 1,000 or 2,000 votes," Mr. Fryer said.

Tikhonov in Athens

ATHENS (R) — Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov arrived here Monday for three days of talks with Greek leaders aimed at improving industrial and economic cooperation. Mr. Tikhonov's visit is the first to Greece by a Soviet prime minister and follows a visit to Moscow in 1979 by the then Prime Minister Konstantine Karamanlis, now president of the republic. The visiting Soviet leader was greeted on arrival by Socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu and his entire cabinet. Strict security measures were imposed at Athens Airport and along the 10-kilometre route to the city centre, which was lined by several thousand people, mostly members of the youth branch of the Greek Communist Party. Talks began later Monday and are expected to cover a wide range of topics. There are signs that Greek officials want to find a way out of what they see as excessive dependence on the European community for farm produce markets and project financing.



THE SNOW DOESN'T LET UP: The severe snow storms which started Friday night

continued to lash Jordan Sunday disrupting normal life and the whole of the capital was covered in a white blanket of snow (Photo by Rifa'i Al 'Allan)

Blizzards trap scores of motorists on main Beirut-Damascus highway

BEIRUT (R) — American and Italian troops trying to reach scores of motorists trapped in the snow-bound Lebanese mountains abandoned the attempt Monday because Syrian troops controlling the disaster zone refused to let them in. At least 39 people have so far been found frozen to death on a bleak stretch of the main Beirut-Damascus highway in the worst natural disaster to hit Lebanon for years. An unknown number are still stranded in the snow and Lebanese rescue teams are struggling to reach them. A U.S. Marines spokesman said the worst affected part of the highway, had given permission for the Americans to try to rescue people by helicopter but not to come in by road. But helicopters attempting to reach the scene were forced back

by storms still raging in the mountains. An Italian spokesman said his contingent, which has no helicopters, had also been told it could not enter the Syrian-controlled area. A convoy of nine U.S. assault vehicles, big 17-tonne armoured troop carriers, and a smaller Italian group, including a specially-equipped tank, waited for several hours at the Lebanese Defence Ministry just outside Beirut while officers discussed what to do next. The U.S. and Italian soldiers are in Beirut as part of a 4,800-man peacekeeping force. The U.S. spokesman said his Marines had also been told by Israeli forces manning positions along the highway that the road up to the disaster scene was impassable. Lebanese rescue teams were on the road for the third day running.

however, and police sources said 30 more people had been dug out of the snow alive Monday. This brought the total rescued to about 270. The sources said they had no reports of any more bodies being discovered. Twenty-three were found Sunday and 16 on Saturday. State radio said fog was hampering the rescue work. The U.S. spokesman said the Marines had been asked to help in rescue operations in other areas of Lebanon and hoped to start out early Tuesday. They might still go to the scene of the main disaster if the political problems could be solved. The blizzards hit Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel on Friday. On the Damascus highway, which runs through some of the highest mountains in the four countries, driving snow forced drivers to stop and quickly trapped their cars.

Mondale enters presidential race

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (R) — Former Vice-President Walter Mondale Monday entered the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination race, pledging to restore America to global leadership and sanity to the nation's nuclear policy. Mr. Mondale, the third Democrat to declare himself a candidate, made the announcement in a speech to his home state legislature in Minnesota. The campaign for the nomination has a year to go before the 1984 presidential primary season opens. He said in his speech: "I seek the presidency to restore our global leadership." He said he intended to point the nation towards "sanity" in the nuclear arms race by seeking a nuclear freeze agreement with the Soviet Union and ratification of the strategic arms limitation treaty already negotiated but shelved by the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Mondale, 55, who was vice president under President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981, entered the Democratic race as the acknowledged front-runner. He has a vast political organisation, proven money-raising ability and strong support from organised labour and minority groups as a leader of the opposition party's liberal wing. His announcement had long been scheduled and served chiefly to energise the Democratic race by giving his large field of rivals a target to aim at. Besides Senators Alan Cranston of California and Gary Hart of Colorado, who have already declared their candidacies, he will face competition from ex-astronaut Sen. John Glenn of Ohio, Sen. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, former Governor Reubin Askew of Florida, and possibly Sen. Dale Bumpers of Arkansas.

Since Sen. Edward Kennedy quit the contest on Dec. 1, Democratic preference polls have shown Mr. Mondale leading his nearest rival, Mr. Glenn, by two to one. He will be under fierce pressure to hold that lead and avoid damaging mistakes in the full year that remains before the first 1984 presidential primary elections. Mr. Mondale said he would help restore unity to a divided nation and fairness to economic recovery policies. He renewed charges that other nations discriminated unfairly against U.S. products while dumping goods on American markets. "I offer a presidency that promotes exports aggressively, tears down barriers to the sales of our services, and insists that our trading partners open their markets as wide to us as we open ours to them," he said.

'Short-circuit' caused Turin cinema fire

TURIN (R) — Investigators probing a cinema fire which killed 64 people eight days ago, said Monday they had found strong evidence the blaze was caused by an electrical short-circuit. Police initially thought the fire, which destroyed the Statuto Cinema in the centre of Turin, may have been the work of arsonists but this was quickly ruled out. Francesco Marzachi, one of the investigators, said experts had not finished sifting through the wreckage but had examined wiring they believed was to blame. "At the moment we have no evidence to suggest that the fire was caused by anything other than a short-circuit," he said. The cinema manager was charged with multiple manslaughter after the fire, the worst in Turin's post-war history, for failing to ensure all the emergency exits functioned.

Opposition charges Tokyo suppressed coup report

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese opposition member of parliament said Monday that the country's armed forces plotted to overthrow the government in 1980 with a coup that was to involve dropping napalm bombs on the prime minister's office. Yasuhide Narasaki, a member of the small New Liberal Club, said in parliament that sources in the country's self defence forces had told him the conspiracy was detected in advance and aborted. He demanded to know if this was correct. Chief Cabinet Secretary Masaharu Gotoda said in reply that the government would investigate his claim although it did not believe it. Japan's national police agency said at a press conference that it had no knowledge of any coup attempt, while the defence agency said that its inquiries so far showed Mr. Narasaki's allegation to be totally groundless.

Mr. Narasaki told a lower house committee that according to his information the coup was planned for June 1980 and involved up to 10,000 men in the 240,000-strong armed services. Mr. Narasaki said the authorities covered up the coup attempt for fear that top officers would have to be disciplined if it was made public and that this would adversely affect the country's defence setup. He quoted his sources as saying that about 120 officers and men, including instructors, received lenient punishments and were sent to unimportant posts. Mr. Narasaki said the plot involved dropping napalm bombs on the prime minister's office, seizing the parliament building and the offices of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation and political parties. Martial law would then be declared and the head of a provisional government named, he said.

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FEATURES

Jailed mafia boss can rule from prison

By Michael Sheridan
Reuters

OTTAVIANO, Italy — Of the 30,000 people in Ottaviano, only the local priest talks openly about Italy's most feared gang boss, Don Raffaele Cutolo.

Questions about Cutolo, self-styled folk hero and imprisoned head of the "new organised Camorra," or Naples mafia, run into a wall of silence.

Thousands may march in Naples and trade unions may strike against the mob, but there are no demonstrations and the shops remain open in Ottaviano where Cutolo's writ is law. The mob, people say, does not exist here.

Cutolo, 43, is serving sentences currently totalling 24 years, but police say this poor town on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius 12 miles

(19 kilometres) from Naples remains his personal fiefdom.

Prosecutors also say Cutolo can run the Camorra from his cell, ordering murders and criminal operations through his lieutenants as he fights rival clans for underworld power.

Investigating magistrate Genaro Costagliola, in a recent indictment of Cutolo and 150 alleged gang members, said Cutolo wielded "absolute and despotic power" over squads of extortionists and killers in the area.

The indictment paints a picture of the old mafia-style shakedown transformed into big business dealing in drugs, smuggling, extortion and illegal building bringing in an annual income of around \$150 million.

But here in Ottaviano, the only man to speak openly about the

gang boss is the frail, grey-haired parish priest who saw him come to church as a child.

"I knew him as a little boy, coming to mass with his father. His family were nicknamed 'the nuns' because they used to work on land owned by a convent," Father Luigi Saviano said in the back room of his small church.

Unlike his parishioners, he says openly that the Camorra exists, and he has no time for Cutolo.

"He has brought shame on this town," says Father Saviano.

"The Camorra has always existed in one form or another. The status quo has made young people distrustful of the state — they have seen their parents and grandparents go hungry."

There were lawless bands in the area for centuries and the Camorra is just the latest. It's a

product of the past."

But Cutolo, who poses in court as an elegant man of honour, poet, philosopher and Robin Hood rolled into one, has brought a new round of savagery to the region that claimed well over 200 lives last year.

An example of Cutolo's influence came when local officials, allocated \$100,000 in relief money after a 1980 earthquake devastated the region, chose not to pass it on to the priest to repair his damaged church.

Instead they gave the money to repair Cutolo's headquarters, a rambling old fortified villa which eyewitnesses said had been hardly touched by the tremor.

The regional government had to step in to make sure the funds were redistributed to those who needed them most.

The indictment pieced together by investigating magistrate Costagliola over a 14-month period is mostly concerned with murder and mayhem in the war between rival Camorra clans for control of the Naples area underworld.

But it also alleges that Cutolo helped Italy's security services to free Christian Democrat politician Ciriaco De Mita after his kidnap by Red Brigades urban guerrillas in 1981.

Mr. Ciriolo was head of regional town planning in charge of reconstruction after the 1980 earthquake. He was released unharmed after an undisclosed ransom was paid to his kidnappers.

The Italian media has described the case as a state surrender to Camorra gangsters and the Red Brigades.

'Hottest new thing in aesthetic surgery'

By Eugene Emory
Reuters

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island — With a thousand dieting books crowding the shelves and keep-fit classes doing booming business, plastic surgeons have come up with a new way to get rid of unsightly bulges.

Vacuum the fat away. "It's the hottest new thing in aesthetic surgery," said Harvey Baumann, a plastic surgeon in Providence and one of about 100 doctors across the country who have begun performing the operation.

Although Dr. Baumann and other doctors stress that the technique is not a substitute for dieting, it does get rid of the so-called "love handles" — pot bellies and collections of fat that some successful dieters seem unable to lose.

The operation is essentially

safe and essentially effective," said Simon Fredricks, professor of plastic surgery at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

But Dr. Fredricks, who chaired a panel that investigated the technique for the American society of plastic and reconstructive surgeons, says adamantly:

"It is not a treatment for obesity under any circumstances. It is for young people who have genetic fat deposits."

About 500 such operations have been done in this country over the past five years.

In the operating room, Dr. Baumann first injects a special fluid throughout the region of fat to break up the fat cells and numb the nerves in the area. Then he inserts a stainless steel tube through a small incision.

Gripping the fatty area with one hand, he forces the tube through the fat and vacuum-like device attached to the tube draws it in.

Eventually, the fat is laced with tiny tunnels. Dr. Baumann then pushes down, collapsing the tunnels.

The operation is not recommended for people over 40 because their skin is less likely to shrink back.

In addition to the risks of anesthesia, the technique can produce bleeding, infection, collections of lymph under the skin, wavy skin or a loss of sensation in the treated area.

Done badly, the operation can damage blood vessels and nerves. It costs between \$1,000 and \$3,000 plus hospital expenses — and most insurance policies do not cover it.

The method, explained Dr. Baumann, takes only a day and the hospital requires two weeks of recuperation.

Traditional surgery to remove bulges leaves a long scar and requires two months of recuperation.

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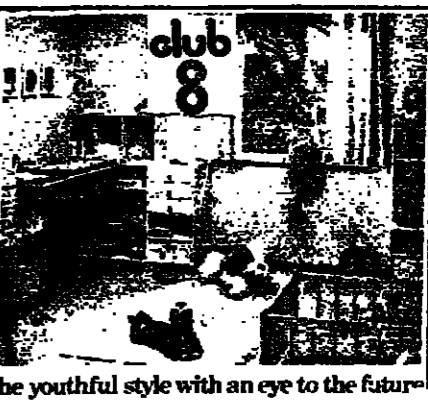
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HOME NEWS

Swiss trade team admires fertiliser facilities in Aqaba

AQABA (Petra) — The Swiss economic delegation, currently visiting Jordan, arrived in the city of Aqaba Monday and toured the chemical fertiliser plant complex. It also discussed with the plant manager areas of possible cooperation between the two countries especially in the fertiliser trade.

The delegation was briefed by the plant manager on the significance of this very viable economic project in terms of the local, Arab and international market. He also talked about the processing of raw materials and the transformation of them into fertiliser and other chemical compounds, and ways of marketing fertilisers in the importing countries.

The guest delegation toured the plant where it saw the manufacturing, and maintenance operations in full swing. It then visited the Aqaba port area where the loading and unloading operations take place directly between the plant and the ships anchored in the harbour. The delegation then visited the Aqaba port itself where it was briefed on the export and import of goods passing through the Aqaba port. It was also informed about the most important projects currently being implemented by the Ports Corporation as well as its future projected enterprises, and witnessed the modern methods being used in the storing of grain in the port's silos.

During the tour, which also included the phosphate plant, the members of the Swiss delegation said how impressed they were by the industrial progress achieved by Jordan.

Seminar reveals danger of clay soil construction

AMMAN (Petra) — The seminar covering construction on thick clay soil and the damage done to low-rise buildings built on it, organised by the Building Research Centre (BRC) of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) in cooperation with the British Building Research Establishment (BRE), will resume its meetings Tuesday.

The seminar, which was opened by Public Works Minister Awni Al Masri at the Yarmouk University liaison office Sunday, will discuss the results of the joint Jordanian-British research with the aim of improving the foundations of buildings constructed on thick clay soil.

Mr. Masri said at the beginning of the seminar that the development and expansion of construction throughout the world, and the substantial increase in the size of buildings have created numerous structural problems which have resulted in damaged buildings, the most notable of which in this context has been the cracking of walls and distortion of floors. This should in turn prompt us to review the methods used in the construction of foundations on various types of soil, he said.

Concluding his speech, Mr. Masri expressed the hope that cooperation in this field and in other areas of engineering would continue between the BRC and the BRE, after this first very successful joint venture. Teams from the two centres worked for four years to come up with this valuable study, he said, which was financed in the greater part by the British government.

The joint study covered several topics, including research on soil and rock layers, defining the areas of the thick clay soil, drawing up geological maps describing it, and studying the characteristics of the various types of soil.



Members of the National Consultative Council listen to one of the debates which resulted in the passing of nine more articles in the draft traffic law (Petra photo)

Irbid storm repairs begin

IRBID (Petra) — The technical departments of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) and the Irbid District Electricity Company (IDEC) are continuing to work on the maintenance and repair of telephone and electricity lines damaged as a result of the bad weather conditions.

The emergency workshops of Irbid municipality are also continuing to clear the city's streets to make them fit for traffic. The emergency workshops are working round the clock and are equipped with the necessary equipment to clear the streets, Irbid Mayor Abdul Razzaq Tbeishat said.

In relation to the highways, the Irbid district public works directorate, in cooperation with teams from the Armed Forces continue to work to clear the roads in the Ajloun and Jerash districts.

The Irbid Governorate Health Director Mu'ib Al Ghoul has said that the general health situation in the governorate is good, and that no accidents have occurred as a result of the rain and snowfall. He said all hospitals and health centres throughout the governorate have been supplied with the necessary medical resources to cope with any possible emergency cases.

Alia attends tourist fair

PARIS (Petra) — Jordan has participated in the international tourist fair opened in Paris Sunday by the French Minister of Tourism.

Jordan was represented in the fair by Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline, which organised a special pavilion showing the importance with which tourism is regarded in Jordan, and the progress achieved by Alia in this regard. Pictures of Jordan's tourist sites and pamphlets showing the country's progress in all fields were also exhibited at the fair.

UNEP team arrives for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) arrived here Monday for a three-day visit to Jordan during which it will meet a number of officials responsible for environmental matters.

The delegation will meet Tuesday with the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment and a number of officials from the National Planning Council to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation with Jordan.

The delegation will raise a number of specific ideas on environmental development so that it can keep pace with Jordan's economic and social development programmes. The delegation includes Saleh Osman, regional director of the UNEP, and Na'im Qaddah, adviser of the executive director for Arab affairs.

NCC proposes television schedule selection committee

By Lamis Andoni
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In its regular session Monday the National Consultative Council (NCC) approved nine more articles of a draft traffic law which has been under discussion for the last five consecutive sessions, and proposed the formation of a television programme selection committee.

The articles passed Monday covered regulations with regard to mass passenger transportation and registration fees.

The council also discussed and endorsed recommendations, submitted by its Social and Educational Committee, relating to the choice television programmes. The recommendations came as a response to a suggestion by 12 NCC members to cancel certain television programmes which "are hostile to Jordanian traditions and culture". The council's Social and Educational Committee called for the production of educational programmes with the aim of "strengthening the national identity of our citizens"; the objective documentation of the Jordanian culture, the protection of "the Arab nationalist basis" in the selection and making of television programmes. The committee also proposed the formation of a specialised national committee "to control everything related to the history and culture of Jordan" and to select programmes to be shown on television.

The committee's recommendations led to a debate on the Jordanian information policy. NCC member Leith Eshbeilat pointed out that there is actually an appointed higher committee for programmes which should control what is shown on television. "Why didn't the committee attend the council's Social and Educational Committee when they discussed the issue? I wonder if the higher committee for programmes carries out its job at all", Mr. Eshbeilat said. He added that the committee, and not only the Ministry of Information, should bear responsibility for the screening of bad programmes on television. Jordanian television is a governmental institution and falls under the jurisdiction of the Information Ministry, but the Minister of Information, Adnan Abu Odeh, was not able to attend Monday's session due to ill health.

NCC Member Amin Shkeir said that the core of the question does not lie in the choice of the programmes but is instead a matter of laying down the basic principles of Jordanian information policy in a way that serves "the strengthening of our Arab nationalist belonging". Finally, Mr. Taher Hikmat suggested that the council should discuss in detail at a future session Jordan's information policy. The council supported Mr. Hikmat's proposal.

The most controversial of the nine articles of the draft traffic law was article number 61 which states that "the Central Traffic Committee may request the owners of trucks or medium size public passenger vehicles operating on the same route to merge into one company if these trucks or vehicles are owned by more than one person".

The article also empowers the Minister of the Interior to revoke the licenses granted to these companies and individuals if the merger is not affected within the period fixed by the committee, provided this period be no less than three months.

Some members objected to the idea on the grounds that the mergers might jeopardise the interests of the most successful company.

The article was approved by the council provided that the Central Traffic Committee is able to justify the enforcement of the mergers of these small companies "and if the public interest requires so".

Among other important articles that were passed on Monday's session were the following:

- If a public transportation car property is sold by its owner who happens to be exempt from registration fees to another who is not exempt, then the new owner must pay the registration fees in full.
- Medium sized public passenger vehicles are prohibited from operating on any of the routes in the Kingdom without prior permission. This also applies to service taxi companies.
- Ten per cent of revenues collected from vehicle maintenance and examination fees are to be allocated for employees of the maintenance and vehicle examination department at the Traffic Directorate.
- Forty per cent of the collection fees should be allocated to the municipalities and village councils.
- Diplomatic and consular drivers should be exempt from driving licence registration fees.

The discussion of the draft traffic law will continue next Monday.



Some of the 19 participants taking part in a course in elementary accountancy which began Monday (Petra photo)

Three-week accountancy course starts

AMMAN (Petra) — A course in elementary accountancy to help train employees from a number of Jordanian companies and institutions began here Monday. The aim of the course is to simplify accountancy techniques and to provide employees, managers, and heads of sections in these companies and institutions with the basic information which could help them understand budget tables, balance sheets and reports.

Specialised accountants will lecture during the course, and 19 employees from several Jordanian companies and institutions will participate in the three-week course.

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Conditions:
The competition is open to all students of Jordanian nationality in Secondary Schools in Jordan, being 16 to 18 years of age. The essay should be written in one of the official languages of the European Communities and sent to the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Amman, P.O. Box 926794, before 5 March 1983.

It should be accompanied by a registration form, which is available from the headmaster of each school, and which must be filled in by the student and the headmaster.

The Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Amman
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You couldn't express it better

Jordan Times

In Washington, confusion is politics

BECAUSE Ariel Sharon was seen as "intent on using bullying tactics" against the United States, and after careful study of American policy goals, the Reagan administration "tentatively" decided, "even before the release of the Israeli report on the massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut," that the inquiry's best result would be one that toppled Mr. Sharon, while enabling Mr. Begin to retain power.

You would think the above were a Hollywood script had it not been written by a Washington Post's diplomatic correspondent recently. The whole article, headlined U.S. Happy at Choice of Arens and reprinted on this page today, calls for comment, however, not because it is by Mr. Goshko but mainly for the striking similarity between what Washington and American writers believe.

We know that Mr. Goshko does not necessarily speak for the White House and his views may only reflect his own or his newspaper. But when he says U.S. officials regard Gen. Sharon's replacement by Israel's Washington Ambassador Moshe

Arens as a positive sign, there is no reason to doubt that that is exactly what officials of the Reagan administration really think.

This could not have been the thinking of those who authored the Reagan proposals of Sept. 1 and who could not have noticed that big a difference between the Israeli prime minister and his defence chief then. Or have times changed from where peace was a "winner", to "Kahan's report would be sufficient to finish off Begin's political career," to where we are now: Arens will be softer than "the unstoppable Arik" on Lebanon?

It is funny how, as he was packing up in Washington, the new defence minister wasted no time in charging that "some" U.S. officials were trying to kick Israel in the teeth, so soon after the joint venture in Lebanon.

The Americans might prefer to call this confusion politics, but it is not, and they should seriously start thinking about a better performance for the Middle East. So far, their policies have not been more than an exercise in political futility.

JORDAN'S ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Lebanese deadlock shakes Arab confidence in U.S.

Regardless of the optimistic statements that are periodically made concerning the Lebanese-Israeli-American talks, seventeen rounds of negotiations have taken place and still their objectives are distant. The Israeli forces remain on Lebanese soil and the Israeli negotiator systematically makes the negotiations, enhanced by the Israeli ignored internal divisions, to block any substantive progress.

Israel is working hard, in league with its moderate Saad Haddad, to create new "facts" in southern Lebanon and to ensure that its presence remains a necessity, while also impeding the Lebanese government's efforts to regain sovereignty over the whole of Beirut. Inter-Lebanese factional hostilities are thus encouraged and nourished throughout Lebanon, to make the job increasingly difficult for the Lebanese central authorities.

The U.S. mediator instead of its partner role in the negotiations leaves Israel with a free-hand to act as it likes. If such is the American position, with all the alleged interest it professes in the Lebanese crisis, what can the Arabs expect the U.S. role to be when, or rather if, any future negotiations on the occupied Arab territories under American auspices take place?

Sawt Al Shaab: PNC shows rejectionism to be redundant

The dialogue that has taken place within the Palestine National Council (PNC) meetings is of note to Arabs in general, and the Palestinians in particular, especially those living under the Israeli occupation.

Many of the former spells of extreme nationalism are being broken through the medium of discussion. In response to the extremist demands made by the rejectionist Palestinian leaders at the PNC, the council's spokesman Ahmed Abdul Rahman pointed out that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is not ready to commit suicide by resorting to the extremist's slogans.

As for the rejectionist Arab states, they were quite satisfied to watch the Palestinians being killed in Beirut, Abdul Rahman said, and the arms promised to us by Libya never arrived, he added. To

the same effect, the second PLO leader Salah Khalaf said those who have tirelessly propagated rejectionist ideas are continuing to resort to outmoded tools to tackle an ever-changing situation.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat was quite direct when he stated that the PLO was seeking peaceful political and diplomatic alternatives after it became evident that the Arabs had no stomach for war, and because a million and a half Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza desperately want a peaceful settlement to materialise.

The old rejectionist game is no longer acceptable, as the Palestinians have gained nothing from it. Indeed the Beirut experience has shown that all that extravagant rhetoric amounts to little in the real world of practical action.

U.S. happy at choice of Arens

By John Goshko

U.S. officials regard the choice of Moshe Arens, Israel's ambassador here, to replace Ariel Sharon as defence minister, as a positive sign that the impasse over withdrawing Israeli troops from Lebanon can be resolved without a U.S.-Israeli confrontation.

That assessment seems outwardly at odds with Mr. Arens' image as a hard-line Israeli nationalist in the mould of Mr. Begin. Mr. Arens has publicly opposed J.S. ideas about the nature of a Lebanese solution and President Reagan's broader peace initiative or resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.



Moshe Arens

weighed the possible effects on American policy goals and had concluded tentatively that the best result would be one that toppled Mr. Sharon, while enabling Mr. Begin to retain power.

Front-runner

Now, at a time when events appear to be moving in that direction, the emergence of Mr. Arens with the defence portfolio—a position that would make him the front-runner eventually to succeed Mr. Begin—fits this best-case scenario of U.S. policymakers.

No one in the administration is under any illusion that the change

will lead to a breakthrough on a Lebanon agreement. The expectation is that the turmoil unleashed within Israel by the report will set matters back by several weeks.

Last week Mr. Arens, while stressing that the United States and Israel have a common objective in Lebanon, warned in an interview that his government intends to press its demands in the Lebanon negotiations and stressed that reaching an accord "is going to take time."

Still, the U.S. hope is that the removal of Mr. Sharon's dominant presence from the Begin cabinet will produce a new power centre there, focussed on Mr. Arens and the foreign minister, Mr. Shamir, whose views parallel those of the ambassador, and that they gradually will nudge Mr. Begin toward coming to terms over Lebanon.

In the administration and in diplomatic quarters, the reviews on his performance have not been particularly favourable. His most effective moments have come during periods of acute tension when his articulateness has made him an impressive spokesman.

But, while Mr. Arens has said many times that he wanted to improve "communication and understanding" between Washington and Jerusalem, most observers feel that he usually has had the opposite effect.

—From the Washington Post.

The tone is unchanged

By Rami G. Khouri

If it is true that individuals and societies are most honestly measured when they are subjected to physical stress and moral pressure, then this is a good opportunity to assess the current debate within Israel and thereby try to discern a pattern in the true flow of political power and sentiment in Israeli society. The Kahan Commission's report on the massacres in the Palestinian camps in Beirut has elicited considerable comment both inside and outside Israel, most of it of the moral variety. The report tried to assign individual responsibility for some of the events surrounding the massacres to several Israelis, civilians and military alike. The net effect of the report's publication, however, has been to gloss over individual responsibility and, rather, to pin the blame for the whole Lebanese war mess on the former defence minister, Ariel Sharon. It is this precise tendency that I think deserves examination, for it could tell us quite a bit about political reality in Israel.

The penchant in Israel for blaming Mr. Sharon for Israeli misdeeds in Lebanon is not so surprising. The conviction of United States Lt. William Calley, Jr. in 1971 of premeditated murder of 22 South Vietnamese civilians at My Lai in March 1968 is a similar case, where an individual was singled out for punishment for a deed, or a sentiment, that can only be fully explained by understanding the emotional base of the society from which that individual sprang. Neither Lt. Calley nor Ariel Sharon were innocent people wrongly blamed. But I wonder, how much did these two people's societies and political establishments take advantage of their individual excesses and thus dump on their lone, if trigger-happy shoulders, a dose of moral scorn that is more appropriately borne by entire societies and nation-states?

One of the more interesting figures in Israel these days is the former Labour foreign minister, Mr. Abba Eban, who seems to become more reasonable with every step away from the reigns of power. His recently expressed views on the possible emergence of a future Benelux-type association of

Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian entities is the kind of reasonable Israeli view that one wishes would be expressed more often. Mr. Eban wrote a newspaper article in Israel last week in which he concluded: "Not a single aim of the war (in Lebanon) has been achieved. There is no security agreement (with Lebanon); no freedom from terrorist violence; no stability in Lebanon; no peace treaty; no normalisation; no 'peace triangle' formed by Egypt-Israel-Lebanon; no elimination of the PLO as a decisive factor in the diplomatic process; no disposition by the Arabs in Judea, Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza to join the Camp David talks on the basis of the Begin government's interpretation (autonomy as a prelude to permanent Israeli rule). The only result that is permanent is the death of nearly 500 Israelis and the burden on Israel from thousands of other deaths. And this sordid fiasco is the direct result of a ministerial appointment; if Sharon had not been appointed, if Ezer Weizman had not resigned, if someone in the Likud leadership other than Sharon had been appointed to the defence portfolio, the peace in Galilee would have been assured either by a continuance of the ceasefire or through a limited operation confined to the 40-kilometre belt of which Mr. Begin spoke in the Knesset on June 8, 1982.... The Sharon tenure has been more than a nightmare, for a nightmare does not leave any dead behind. The question is whether the arena, no longer dominated by a figure estranged from Israel's better traditions and visions, will be liberated for Israeli and Zionist ideas that can give our national life a sense of purpose and inspiration. If this happens, the historian will write that Israel's nightmare was sad — but brief."

I have quoted this passage because I think it illustrates well the temptation to see Ariel Sharon as the aberration who poisoned the good name of Israel, rather than recognising that a phenomenon such as Ariel Sharon can flourish in Israel only because the soil is ripe for it. Mr. Eban would have us believe that if only Mr.

Sharon would go away, Israel could revert to its "better traditions and visions" and once again be a society "with a sense of purpose and inspiration". This is badly contradicted by the facts of history, and Mr. Eban, who writes very thick books on the history of his people, should be among the first to admit Israel routinely killed, bombed, occupied and ravaged Arab societies well before Mr. Sharon was defence minister. I suspect the ferocity of Israeli moral apologists these days is commensurate with the gravity of the crimes that their country and their people have committed in Lebanon. If Israelis believe they can cleanse their souls by denouncing Ariel Sharon and then trumpeting the fact via the moralistic mumbo-jumbo uttered of elegant but intellectually erratic smoothies such as Abba Eban, then they have a great deal further to travel than they think to reach their better traditions and visions. There is no redemption in scapegoating, no moral comfort in passing the buck. These are elementary principles that should be the bedrock of nations with a "sense of purpose and inspiration."

All the evidence suggests clearly that Mr. Sharon and the Begin-led Likud bloc have the strong majority support of the Israeli people. Far from being an aberration of Israeli society, Ariel Sharon would appear more genuinely to be a symbol of it. The Kahan Commission's report has made the technical adjustment that is required by any self-policing democratic institution — Mr. Sharon has been demoted within the hierarchy of the government, and some senior army officers have been reprimanded. But underneath all this, the political tone of Israel appears to remain the same. A majority of Israelis clearly favours the hardline, strong-arm tactics of the Begin-Sharon-Eitan school. The people who produced one Sharon are capable of producing many others. This is the sad conclusion one draws from watching Israeli society deal with the aftermath of the Kahan Commission report. Sadder yet is that there is no indication that the Arab political leaderships have a strategy to deal with this fact.

Inquiry may help decide who's to succeed Begin

By David Rogers

JERUSALEM — Apart from bringing about a cabinet reshuffle, Israel's inquiry into the Beirut massacre of Palestinians could have a more lasting political impact by helping decide who will succeed Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

One result of the inquiry's findings was the entry of a new face in the succession stakes — Moshe Arens, the man chosen to take over from Ariel Sharon as defence minister. A second consequence of the traumatic episode was the undoubted enhancement of the reputation of another leadership contender, Deputy Premier and Housing Minister David Levy.

Conversely, the inquiry was a blow to the political ambitions of two other contenders, Mr. Sharon himself and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who were both criticised. The commission found Mr. Sharon indirectly responsible for the civilian deaths and recommended his resignation or dismissal.

Mr. Begin, 69 and in poor health, shows no sign of stepping down in the near future, but the inquiry's report highlighted how remote his leadership has become and censured him for lack of involvement in crucial decisions. The succession question has clearly been a factor in some of the political manoeuvring that has followed the inquiry.

The possibility of an early election, one of the options Mr. Begin considered in the wake of the report's publication, appears to have receded. Some of Mr. Begin's coalition partners fear that they would lose Knesset (parliament) seats and want to avoid early polls. The Labour opposition, trailing badly in opinion surveys, is also not keen to test the electoral waters and the position of its leader, Shimon Peres, is shaky.

Mr. Peres, whose personal standing in the surveys is low, has indicated he may be prepared to stand down if President Yitzhak Navon agrees to take over the party's leadership after his term as

head of state ends in May. Aides say the prime minister generally watches the succession rivalry with amusement. But Mr. Begin was reported to have been annoyed by remarks by Mr. Sharon's spokesman Uri Dan, who said "those who did not want Sharon as defence minister will get him back as prime minister."

There was suspicion that the idea of a national unity government, which so far has not progressed beyond low-level backroom consultation, was launched by Herut Party rivals to stop Mr. Arens taking over the defence portfolio.

For the past year, Mr. Arens has been Israel's ambassador in Washington. The 57-year-old professor has never before held a cabinet post, and chaired parliament's foreign affairs and security committee before his appointment as ambassador.

Mr. Begin has long respected his hawkish views and administrative talents and tried once before to persuade him to take on Israel's second most powerful job. The professor, an expert on aeronautics engineering, turned it down at that occasion because he opposed returning the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt.

No softening

He supports Jewish settlement on occupied Arab land just as strongly as Mr. Sharon did, and no one expects his appointment to result in any softening of Israel's position on security issues.

Mr. Arens has been active in right-wing politics for decades. He served in the Knesset (parliament) and has many admirers in the Herut (freedom) Party, the largest in Mr. Begin's coalition.

At the fateful Sep. 16 cabinet meeting that was briefed on the army's decision to send Lebanese militia into the Beirut refugee camps, the only minister to voice fears about the risks was Deputy Premier Levy.

Mr. Levy's roots in the less privileged Sephardi (Oriental) Jewish community and his concern for social problems have gained him considerable popular support. His stature was further advanced by

his vigorous denunciation of last week's hand grenade attack on leftists. Apparently because of his conciliatory image, he was chosen to represent the government at the funeral of the "Peace Now" demonstrator killed in the attack.

Mr. Levy is reported to have played a determined backstage role in ensuring that the inquiry's recommendation to strip Mr. Sharon of the defence portfolio won cabinet backing. Although the inquiry did not recommend any action against Mr. Shamir, the foreign minister was rapped for his failure to follow up an early report he received that the Falangists were "slaughtering" Palestinian civilians in the refugee camps.

Mr. Shamir got the report from Communications Minister Mordechai Zippori but said he was sceptical about its accuracy because of Mr. Zippori's personal feud with Mr. Sharon. The inquiry found it "difficult to find a justification for such disdain for information" that came from a cabinet member. Mr. Shamir's friendship with Mr. Begin pre-dates Israel's statehood, and he has close ties to Herut Party powerbrokers. But his public standing has clearly been dented by the inquiry, and he was bitterly attacked by the Jerusalem Post for trying to delay implementation of the report.

There have been persistent reports that Mr. Begin's loyalty to Mr. Sharon has been shaken by the way the former defence minister battled to keep his job after the inquiry concluded that he should resign from government for his indirect role in the Beirut massacre. Mr. Sharon remains in the cabinet as minister without portfolio, but no specific job has yet been assigned to him and he appears to have lost his place on powerful ministerial committees. He has few friends in the cabinet, which voted 16 to one for his removal from the defence ministry. But he is viewed almost as a martyr by many ordinary Israelis, who feel he was unfairly treated. The fear among Mr. Sharon's opponents is that he may one day exploit this sentiment to make a political comeback.

A permanent fixture

By Sidney Weiland

Reader

VIENNA — The faces sometimes change but the arguments rarely shift in Europe's longest-running arms negotiations, a muted dialogue that has gone on for 10 years. Weary delegates see no quick prospect of breaking the deadlock that has persisted since 12 NATO and seven Communist nations began bargaining on the size of their armies.

While no reductions have been achieved, nobody is thinking of ending what has become the most permanent fixture — and one of the most complex — on the East-West arms control calendar. Both sides value the twice-weekly meetings as the only forum where NATO and the Warsaw pact meet formally at the same table.

Since negotiations started, the U.S. has changed its chief delegate four times, the Soviet Union three times, other countries more frequently. Some of the arms experts who first met in Vienna in 1973 have long since retired.

"At that time," a veteran recalls, "the pessimists were saying the talks would last three to four years at most." The deep suspicions that have dogged the negotiations were already evident when preparatory talks began in January 1973. The full conference opened in October that year.

For seven years, negotiations have been stalled over the size of Soviet bloc forces, with NATO accusing Warsaw pact governments of falsifying their manpower figures. Rival plans for troop cuts have been fought over for months, then discarded. While agreement has been reached on broad guidelines, the numbers game has proved impossible to resolve.

The negotiations — called "MBFR" for Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions — have a limited goal: To reduce conventional manpower and weapons in a heavily armed flashpoint area of central Europe which includes the two German states.

Both sides agree they should aim to cut ground and air forces to 900,000 for each alliance, with a ceiling of 700,000 for ground troops. How to get there is the problem.

European anxiety

U.S. allies originally pressed the search for two-way cuts in hopes of heading off pressure in the U.S. Congress for a reduction of the large American military presence in Europe.

The calling of the Vienna conference ended talk of unsettling

unilateral American cuts at that time. Now, Western European anxiety has flared again following renewed congressional attempts last year to reduce American forces in Europe, as part of a drive to trim military spending. NATO planners fear West Germany and other countries may be tempted also into unilateral cuts, to make similar savings. They believe this has sharpened the sense of urgency in Vienna.

Some Western officials admit they are more optimistic, and point to signs that both sides seem to be negotiating more purposefully than at any time in the last two years.

By offering to pull out 7,000 more men than the U.S. as a first step, the Soviet Union has conceded that it enjoys ground force superiority, but not as much as the West claims.

NATO says a breakdown of Communist forces tabled by the Warsaw pact understates the real figures by about 160,000 men. In its latest proposal, the Warsaw pact has suggested the super powers set a "mutual example" by making token reductions, then freezing remaining forces pending further negotiations.

Communist diplomats say this could involve 20,000 Soviet and 13,000 U.S. troops, and could be completed in one to two years. The West says the scheme is impractical because there is no agreement so far on the size of Warsaw pact forces.

Soviet bluff

According to NATO, the Communist alliance has about 960,000 ground troops instead of the 805,000 admitted to by the Warsaw pact. NATO strength in the area is about 800,000. Air force totals, less than 200,000 each, are not in dispute.

A U.S. delegate says the mutual example idea is a Soviet bluff. "All they want is the appearance of reductions," he says. Last July, NATO offered a linked four-stage reduction schedule, spread over seven years, guaranteeing eventual cuts by all 11 countries with troops in central Europe. The first stage would involve 30,000 Soviet and 13,000 U.S. ground troops. The guarantee was given to satisfy Communist demands for a binding commitment to stem the growth of the West German army, with 335,000 men the biggest in Western Europe.

Warsaw pact negotiators have scorned the plan, but have not rejected it outright. They contend it is too watertight enough and ignores Soviet demands that armaments should also be cut.

LETTERS

Take another look

To the Editor:

I read, with interest, the guest commentary by Linda Layne regarding education for married women in Jordan (Jordan Times, Feb. 13). Many of her points were well taken but I ask her to take another look at what, on the surface, appears to be a gross inequity.

It has been my observation that in the traditional Arab culture, females may, in large numbers, marry before the age of eighteen. Males marry so young in much smaller numbers. Indeed, I'm still waiting to meet the Arab male who married at 14 or 15. The rule of thumb seems to be to marry a girl young enough to be of unassailable virtue to a man old enough to be economically or professionally established.

That this is highly valued in Western society, also, can be proved by the great acceptance of the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales: Accepted precisely because it followed the above rule.

The fact that married schoolboys are not required to leave school could well be because there are so very few their numbers are in consequential.

The explanation for excluded married females: That they will discuss intimacies with innocent schoolmates? Is clumsily but evocatively put. A school girl and a married woman are not peers even if the same age. The stress and challenge of establishing a marriage are great at any age, especially for the young. To keep them in a child's world, part of the day and in an adult world the other part is asking almost too much. Far better a solution to the loss of education in the ordinary school attendance is to broaden and increase the educational opportunities for married women in all fields and for all ages and levels of competence.

The cultural trait of arranged marriages of younger women to older men seems odd to Western eyes at first, but within the broad context of a family-based, patriarchal society it appears to protect everyone's interest well, including the young bride.

Is the social system in America, for example, any more successful in protecting an adolescent girl from exploitation? Only a few years ago in a number of states pregnant teachers were excluded from school on the grounds that they would be a bad influence on students. In the last two decades the social mores have changed to such a degree that we see, in the U.S., one million girls a year leaving secondary school to bear illegitimate babies with the only societal support being eligibility for welfare payments.

Five times that number obtain abortions. (These figures were quoted in The Houston Chronicle, Sept. 1982). There is now legislation debated regarding whether government agencies dispensing contraceptives to teenagers should "sneak" to their parents.

(As only females require medical prescriptions they would be the only ones "tattled on", not boys). None of this is either edifying or commendable. As a woman and mother of daughter I would like to see my girls and all young girls begin sexual activity under the most optimal life circumstances. A loss of education is a serious sacrifice and should be prevented if possible. But to enter womanhood with honour, respectability, full social acceptance, economic security, the right to proclaim pregnancy early and obtain medical care, recognition as an adult in an adult situation is full compensation and an award that girls in the West are so often cruelly and bitterly denied.

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ECONOMY

Venezuela bans sale of foreign currency

CARACAS (R) — Venezuela Sunday night announced a ban on sales of foreign currency Monday and Tuesday because of a flow of capital out of the country.

A government statement said the decision followed a meeting of Venezuela's council of ministers which analysed "the capital flight that has taken place recently."

Asked by reporters to elaborate on the government announcement, Finance Minister Arturo Sosa replied: "We are going to wait for the two days to pass."

Last week he ruled out a devaluation of the bolivar to improve Venezuela's balance of payments.

Venezuela, a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has been hit by the world oil glut. But on Friday its oil minister, Dr. Humberto Calderon Berti, said Venezuela would not cut prices and would strictly follow OPEC agreements.

Sunday night's government decision followed Mr. Sosa's return from a tour of the United States and Europe, where he had talks on refinancing \$6.6 billion of Venezuela's short-term foreign debt falling due this year. The country's total public sector debt is \$18.5 billion.

Bankers in Frankfurt have said Venezuela's capital outflow was believed to be running at a rate of up to \$100 million a day.

Meanwhile, Venezuela has launched a "diplomacy offensive" to prevent a worldwide collapse of oil prices.

Several official missions, made up of top-ranking petroleum experts, are scheduled to leave this week on a campaign which will take them to 16-oil producing countries, including nearly all OPEC members.

Gulf oil officials to map out strategy

BAHRAIN (R) — Oil ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council are expected to meet in the next two days to map out a pricing and production strategy, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs Mr. Yousef Al Alawi Abdullah was quoted as saying Monday.

Council foreign ministers met in Riyadh over the weekend to discuss the oil market situation in the wake of price cuts by North Sea producers and Nigeria.

But they decided to leave broader discussion to the oil ministers, Mr. Abdullah told the Qatari News Agency in Muscat on his return from Saudi Arabia.

Gulf oil analysts said the six council members — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman and Qatar — would seek a joint response to last week's price cuts.

The Gulf analysts said Saudi Arabia now held the key to world oil prices but faced an agonising decision over whether to reduce its tariffs, and if so, by how much.

Other Gulf Cooperation Council members would be almost certain to follow any strategy proposed by the Saudis, the analysts said.

Official sources in Jakarta said earlier Monday that Indonesia, another OPEC member, would also probably take its lead on pricing from the Saudis.

Meanwhile, Marc Nan Nguema, OPEC secretary general, arrived in Lagos Sunday for consultations with Mr. Yahaya Dikko, and current president of the conference.

In a statement broadcast Sunday, Mr. Dikko said: "Events of the last few days highlight the need to resume a dialogue within OPEC and to begin discussions with non-OPEC exporters on long-term oil prices."

Overall value of sterling falls

LONDON (R) — The overall value of sterling fell Monday with its trade-weighted index plunging to a four-year low when the London money market opened following news that Nigeria had cut oil prices, dealers said.

The index, a basket of currencies of Britain's major trading partners with a 1975 base of 100, fell to 80.2 points from 80.7 at the money market close on Friday.

The pound fell to \$1.5375 at the London opening compared with \$1.5440 at the close on Friday, although it later showed signs of stabilising against the U.S. currency.

It opened at 3.6907 West German marks compared with 3.7011.

The dollar also weakened in early European trading, especially against currencies of oil-importing nations such as West Germany and Japan.

The dollar opened at 2.3897 marks and 232.32 yen compared with Friday's close of 2.3973 marks and 233.77 yen respectively.

Dealers said expectations of an oil price war were fuelled by news of Nigeria's price cut of \$5.50 a barrel, the first public breach of price levels by a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Britain cut its market price for North Sea oil by \$3 a barrel to take it to \$30.50 a barrel last week.

Norway quickly matched the British move, with both countries backdating the new price to Feb. 1.

Money dealers said much of the early selling of sterling Monday appeared to emanate from Europe and came before the London market opened.

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEB. 22, 1983

YOUR DAILY Horoscope

from the Carroll Righter Institute

GENERAL TENDENCIES: An unusually good day and evening to obtain information you require that can lead to advancement in your line of endeavor. Take time to plan the future wisely.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) Find a better way of handling your responsibilities and they are soon behind you. Meet the expectations of loved one.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Discuss future plans with associates. Good organizational work is the key to success now. Express happiness.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) You can gain your aims now if you schedule your time and activities well. Relax and be contented in the evening.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Take no risks where your health is concerned at this time. Put a special talent you have to work.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21) Study new interests that could prove profitable for you in the future. Take treatments to improve your appearance.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Set up a better system so you can make more progress in the future. Be sure to spend your money wisely at all times today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Study every phase of your monetary affairs and find a better way of handling your finances. Be more self-assured.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Be more enthused in regular routines and make more progress. Take no risks with your reputation at this time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Contact a trusted adviser who can give you good ideas so that you can advance in career activities.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) A good day to concentrate on getting ahead in your line of endeavor. Strive for increased happiness.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) Keep busy and accomplish a great deal. Delve into civic work and gain more prestige. Be wary of newcomers.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Go to the right sources for important data you need. A new project needs more study before going ahead with it.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BORN TODAY... he or she will be one of those delightful young persons who will profit from discipline early in life. The talents here will start to express themselves gradually. Teach to be objective and give the benefit of ethical training.

"The Stars impel, they do not compel." What you make of your life is largely up to you!

Andropov plans railway reform

MOSCOW — The iron road plays a vital role in the Soviet Union, with its huge land mass, harsh climate and primitive roads. But the railways' current state of disorganisation and overloading is also a major factor behind the enormous waste and inefficiency of the Soviet economy as a whole.

Improving the efficiency of the railways has become one of the top priorities of Mr. Yuri Andropov, the Soviet leader, who complained that the situation "was deteriorating from year to year" in his inaugural speech to the central party committee last November.

He followed this up a week later by sacking Mr. Ivan Pavlovski, the minister of railways, and replacing him by his deputy, Mr. Nikolai Konarev.

The Soviet rail system is the largest and most heavily used in the world.

It carries more than 10 million passengers a day and boasts nearly 143,000 kilometres of track, of which more than 30 per cent is electrified, with another 6,000 kilometres to be added by the end of the current five-year plan in 1985.

By then, the 3,600 kilometres long Baikal-Amur Magistral (BAM) railway in Siberia should also be completed after 11 years of work.

BAM will relieve pressure on the heavily overloaded trans-Siberian line some 500 kilometres to the south and open up vast new mineral-rich areas of eastern Siberia for exploitation.

The Soviets claim that their huge network carries more freight than the rest of the world's railways combined, and that freight transport will grow by a further 20 per cent in the current plan period to 3,950 billion tonnes/kilometre.

What these statistics do not say, however, is that millions of tonnes/kilometre are clogged up through irrational cross-hauls, that a high percentage of freight is either broken or pilfered en route, and that half the wagons in any given freight train are likely to be unusable because of damage.

Even those which are undamaged spend on average only 120 days in motion every year, and the rest of the time lie idle in sidings.

One of the most extraordinary of the Soviet railway statistics is that the total length of Soviet rail sidings, at 140,000 kilometres, is virtually equal to the length of the actual running track. Once shunted into the sidings, wagons can disappear for months or even years.

Sometimes this is through error or poor organisation.

Occasionally, the factor or factors concerned has inadequate storage facilities and keeps goods or raw materials in the wagons until they are needed.

Most of the damage to freight cars takes place on poorly maintained sidings during loading and unloading.

The problem of damaged wagons has now reached such proportions that factories throughout the country are being urged to set up their own wagon repair shops.

A typical case is that of the huge military and truck complex, Zil, whose general director, Mr. Valery Tsykin, recently complained that at least half of the average train of flatcars or wagons were unfit for loading.

"What can one do when there is almost nothing left of a flatcar other than a metal skeleton, or when a wagon has one door missing — or both — and the hatches have been lost and much else besides?" he asked, plaintively.

"Usually these broken wagons return to the railway and a vast number of such invalids roam the mainlines in search of a haven for repair," he added.

Mr. Tsykin said that Zil had been routinely repairing broken wagons out of its own resources for years, but was investing in new facilities to double its repair capacity and urging other plants to do the same.

Inefficiency is not always the fault of the railways themselves. Often, it is a reflection of shortcomings in other areas of the economy.

Rail experts calculate, for example, that every year they carry — sometimes over long distances — some 25 million tonnes of useless rock because the coalmines do not clean and sort coal before shipment. This figure, incidentally, also casts considerable doubt on the coal industry's claimed production figures.

Nevertheless many of the railways' problems appear to stem from the same bureaucratic rigidities and illogicalities which characterise the Soviet system.

Management of the railways, far from being monolithic and centrally controlled, is highly fragmented. This process of splitting the railways into smaller and smaller territorial divisions is increasing.

Thus, the overall network is now divided for managerial purposes into 31 separate railways, with no fewer than 185 divisions, according to Mr. Anatoli Raizberg, deputy director of the Chelyabinsk division of the South Ural Railway.

He described his own experience when the Orenburg division of the South Ural Railway was split into two new divisions — the Orenburg and the Orsk.

Creation of the new division necessitated the construction of a new four-storey office block and housing for 250 bureaucrats. Before all this happened, trains would hardly even slow down as they passed Kuvaevsk station.

Now that the station marks the dividing line between the two divisions, however, trains are regularly held up before moving across into another division.

Mr. Raizberg suggested that 15,000 bureaucrats could be given more useful jobs if the number of divisions was reduced by a third and the trains would run faster.

LONDON STOCK MARKET

LONDON (R) — Equities turned mixed in quiet trading after early weakness in response to the Nigerian oil price cut, dealers said. The F.T. index at 1500 was down 0.8 at 645.1.

The oil sector was weak on fears the Nigerian cut may lead to further sharp falls in prices, dealers added. B.P. fell 12p at 312 and Shell shed 5p at 438 while Britoil was down 5p at 50.

Government bonds closed above Monday's worst levels to show losses stretching to 74 point in longer dated issues with trading moderate as sterling held steady just below \$1.54 and in technical reaction to Friday's exhaustion of the treasury 10½ pct Exchequer 1987 tap stock, dealers said.

Electricals were mostly firm with Plessey up 6p at 607 and GEC 2p higher at 206 after 208. Banks moved off the lows with Barclays down 7p at 438 after 436 and Lloyds off 28p at 450 after 448 ex dividend, while gold shares turned narrowly mixed.

The Glaxo one-for-one stock split became effective Monday, opening at 670 after closing around 1,338 on Friday, before firming 10p to 680. Associated British Ports was up 8p at 145 while among the leaders, ICI was down 4p at 378 after 376.

Australian shares eased as concern grew over the outcome of next month's federal election result following the opposition Labour Party's western state election success, dealers said.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One sterling	1.5385/95	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.2225/28	Canadian dollars
	2.3917/27	West German marks
	2.6420/35	Dutch guilders
	1.9920/40	Swiss francs
	47.08/12	Belgian francs
	6.7800/50	French francs
	1380.00/1381.00	Italian lire
	232.90/233.05	Japanese yen
	7.3640/90	Swedish crowns
	7.0430/80	Norwegian crowns
	8.4700/50	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	503.50/504.50	U.S. dollars

THE BETTER HALF

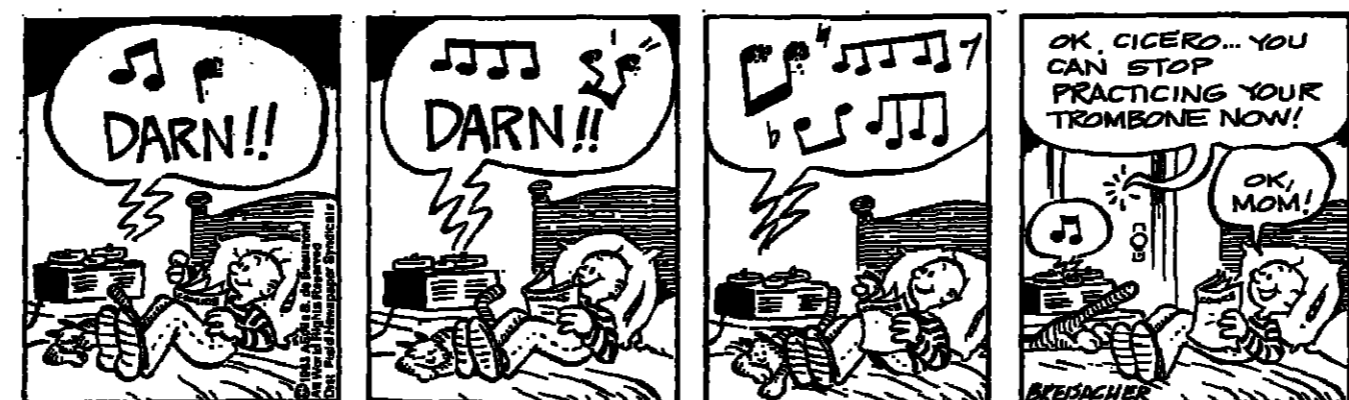
By Harris



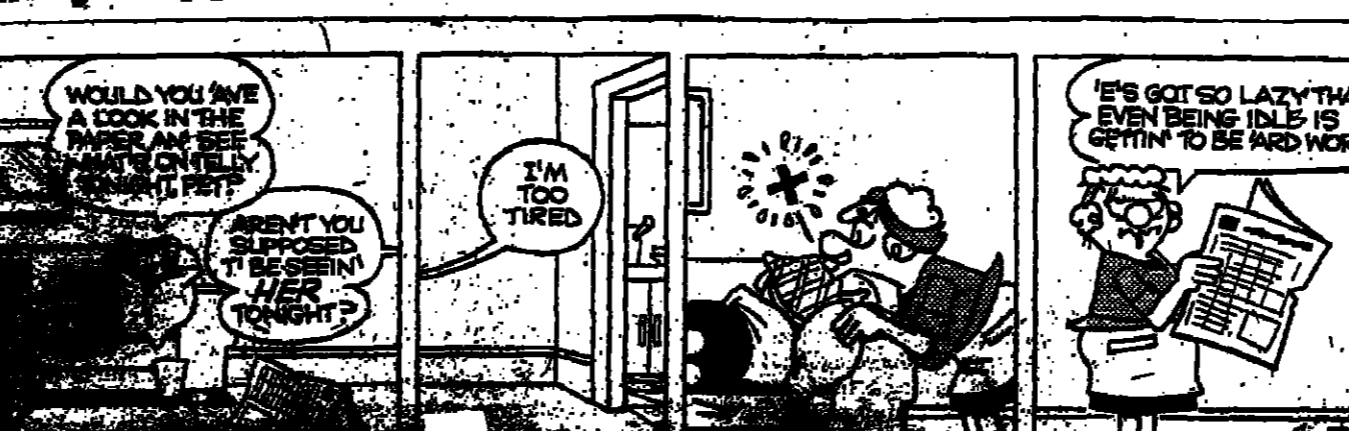
Peanuts



Mutt 'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



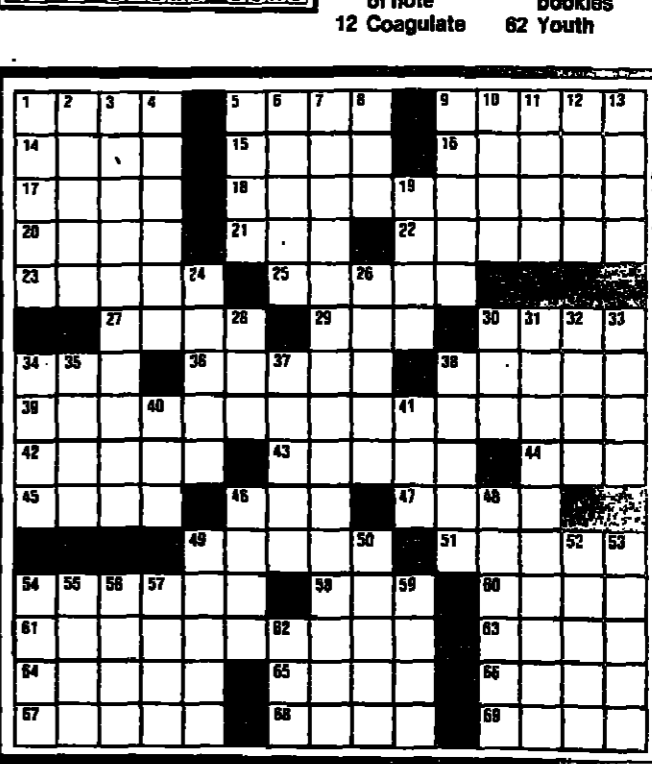
THE Daily Crossword

By Peter G. Snavely

ACROSS	27 Flintstone	54 Congressional	13 Northumbrian
1 Spanish belle	28 And, in Bonn	58 Pair	19 Incursion
5 — vu	30 Slightly open	60 Church	24 Badge type
9 Choose	34 — cleant	62 June 22 of a	26 Combine
14 Author	38 Spokes	64 No. 22 of a	28 June 22 of a
15 Kind of collar	39 Likeness	66 Routine	30 Drg. of
16 Revive	40 e.g.	68 Rosebud	31 No. 11 of a
17 Clothes	42 Mete	69 In the company of	32 Iron and
18 No. 9 of a group	43 Part of an act	70 for one	33 Take it
20 Portion of tobacco	44 Superlative suffix	71 Author	34 Practice for a boat
21 More distant	45 Beasty	72 MIL awards	35 Escutcheon
22 Supply with oxygen	46 Heaven	73 — out (supplements)	37 Rolltops
23 Seraglio	47 Circle parts	74 Attacks	38 Inactive
25 10-armed creature	48 Subway fare	75	40

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

ERAS	SCALES	MIEN
ALIT	COMER	ODER
IMPOTATIVE	DRIVE	
REITERED	MAITIED	
THAPS	DIVIA	
SITRESS	MATERIAL	
CHORE	HAIZER	ABAI
ROCKS	DINES	CRIC
ALSHIELD	ROUDE	
RESHITIA	TEDEED	
ONIS	LARA	
STONES	CAPITOLS	
WADE	TRAVELOR	QUE
ALIS	LAGER	REINT
BLITY	OVERS	SEAS



WORLD

Black African front-line leaders gather in Zimbabwe for talks

HARARE (R) — The leaders of black Africa's six "front-line" states gathered in Harare Monday to discuss the protracted Namibian (South West African) independence dispute and to formulate a common position for next month's Non-Aligned summit in New Delhi.

They were joined for their talks at the presidential residence in Harare by Namibian guerrilla leader Sam Nujoma, who said Sunday the war in the territory, ruled by South Africa in defiance of the United Nations, had reached a crucial stage.

Officials said they expected Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos to brief his colleagues on

developments in his country's contacts with South Africa.

The Angolan news agency ANGOP said Sunday that Angola would agree to a second round of talks with South Africa aimed at speeding Namibian independence and bringing peace to Angola's frontier with Namibia. The talks are expected to take place this week in the Cape Verde Islands.

The front-line states are closely concerned with the Namibia negotiations. They have all condemned attempts by South Africa, backed by the United States, to link Namibian independence with a pull-out of Cuban troops from Angola.

The on-day summit was attended

by president Dos Santos, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Quett Masire of Botswana, Samora Machel of Mozambique and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

President Machel was expected to brief his colleagues on recent talks his country had with South Africa. The Socialist government in Maputo accuses the republic of running a guerrilla campaign against it.

All six nations charge South Africa with waging a war of destabilisation to keep its black neighbours economically dependent and back arguments that black rule does not work.

The six are expected to press their charges against South Africa at the New Delhi conference.

President Masire held bilateral talks with Mr. Mugabe before Monday's summit began, officials said, but gave no details.

Both governments are concerned that refugees from fighting between government troops and rebels in southwestern Zimbabwe are crossing into Botswana.

Zimbabwe fears dissidents may be seeking a haven from pursuing troops while the Gaborone government is anxious that genuine refugees are not denied hospitality.

Peking less pessimistic about ties with Moscow

PEKING (R) — Chinese Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang has said it should not be difficult to improve relations between Peking and Moscow despite 20 years of bitter hostility.

The official New China News Agency Sunday night reported that Mr. Lu told Susumu Nikaide, secretary-general of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party: "It is our sincere wish to resume normal relations with the Soviet Union."

"I don't agree with the view that it is difficult to move the piled-up resentment between China and the Soviet Union," Japanese sources quoted Mr. Hu as telling Japanese journalists before his meeting with Mr. Nikaide Sunday that Sino-Soviet talks were expected to resume in Moscow on March 1.

The first round of talks took place in Peking last October, but made little progress. They were the first high-level negotiations between the giant Communist neighbours since 1969.

Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian told Mr. Nikaide that next month's talks would not lead to any dramatic improvement in relations, while Premier Zhao Ziyang said China's attitude to the Soviet Union remained unchanged, based on opposition to hegemonism — domination of one country over a region.

But diplomatic sources said Mr. Hu's remarks on Sino-Soviet relations appeared more optimistic than other recent comments by Chinese leaders.

China has named three main obstacles to improved relations — the vast Soviet military presence on the Sino-Soviet border and in the buffer state of Mongolia, the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

China regards the estimated 180,000 Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea as Soviet surrogates. The Soviet Union has 700,000 to 800,000 troops on its border with China and in Mongolia, according to Western estimates. Chinese officials have told Western diplomats they regard this as the biggest obstacle to improved relations, although they recognise there has been a lessening of tension in recent years.

Chinese officials are sceptical that the new Soviet leadership under Yuri Andropov will greatly alter policy towards China.

Marcos tries to explain daughter's lovesickness

MANILA (R) — President Ferdinand Marcos Monday appealed for an end to speculation about his elder daughter's relationship with a divorced basketball coach who she secretly married more than a year ago.

"Just leave her alone," the president said. "She has a problem and which of our children does not have problems?"

Mr. Marcos was asked during an interview about the marriage of Imee, 27, to Tommy Manotoc, who afterwards disappeared for six weeks. When he reappeared he said he had been kidnapped by Communist guerrillas.

Mr. Manotoc has resumed his job as a basketball coach, taking his team to the president's home province last week for an exhibition match in front of Imee's mother Imelda.

The marriage has not been publicly accepted by Imee's parents and there has been wide speculation in the Philippines about their relationship.

"They've fallen in love with each other," Mr. Marcos said. "They got married... of course her mother is in a state of frenzy, but that's how mothers are. That's how love is."

Surinam closes its embassy in the Hague

THE HAGUE (R) — Surinam is closing its embassy and consulate in the Netherlands for security reasons, ambassador Henck Herbenberg said.

The move follows a period of strained relations between the Netherlands and Surinam, the former Dutch colony in South America whose military government began a crackdown on the opposition last December.

It was not immediately clear where whether it meant a break in diplomatic relations.

Australians start heated March 5 elections war

SYDNEY (R) — Campaigning for Australia's March 5 general election, suspended last week because of bush fires in which 71 people died, resumed Monday with a venom characteristic of the country's politics.

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser described opposition Labour Party policies as trade union-dominated economic madness which would bankrupt many businesses.

Labour's newly-appointed leader, Bob Hawke, responded by accusing Mr. Fraser of "gross fraud" by selectively leaking documents on Labour Party policies.

Mr. Fraser is facing a tough campaign struggle as his Liberal-National Party coalition lags badly behind Labour in all public opinion polls.

Labour also scored a resounding state election win at the weekend, taking power in western Australia with an average swing in its favour of eight per cent. Political analysts said that, if the swing were repeated nationwide in the federal election, Labour would romp home with a majority of about 40 seats.

Labour needs a nationwide swing of only 1.4 per cent against the conservative government to secure the extra 11 seats it needs to topple Mr. Fraser's parliamentary majority of 21.

Mr. Fraser returned to the cam-

paign trail from a four-day tour of the fire-hit regions of southeastern Australia clearly determined to make up lost ground.

'Blueprint for disaster'

He told a news conference that a proposed Labour Party pact with the trade unions on a prices and incomes policy was a blueprint for disaster.

Labour has said it would seek agreements with unions through arbitration processes on a wide range of economic matters, including wage rises.

"This would paralyse democratic government and transfer power from parliament to the left-wing trade unionists of this world," Mr. Fraser said. "The wage proposals are economic madness. Small businessmen would be bankrupted and big business would be crippled."

Mr. Hawke told a trade union conference that Mr. Fraser had misrepresented Labour policy by leaking copies of it to the press without vital pages containing details of the arbitration processes.

"The three pages which were deliberately excluded in this gross fraud indicated the true nature of consensus and consultation planned by my government between unions, employers and state governments," he added.

Novosti says W. German policies are on the path towards 'nuclear gallows'

BONN (R) — The semi-official Soviet news agency Novosti Monday accused West Germany's ruling conservative parties of following their U.S. allies blindly and pushing their country towards "the nuclear gallows."

In a lengthy commentary issued in Bonn, Novosti said West Germany's position in the world arena meant the outcome of next month's national elections was "by no means a dormant question" for Moscow.

It made no personal attacks on Christian Democratic (CDU) Chancellor Helmut Kohl but clearly indicated the Kremlin did not welcome a victory by his centre-right coalition.

"The electoral statements by leaders of the CDU and (its right-wing sister party) the CSU leave no doubt that this bloc intends to sail blindly in the wake of Washington, which wants to station nuclear first-strike weapons on the territory of the Federal Republic," Novosti said.

"By all appearances, the CDU and CSU consciously want to lead the Federal Republic to the nuclear gallows," it added.

It said the present government,

which took power after a parliamentary realignment in October, appeared to have no independent policies.

"The electoral themes of these parties once again are anti-Sovietism, anti-Communism and revanchism."

The statement made no direct reference to Mr. Kohl's Social Democratic (SPD) rival for the chancellorship, Hans-Jochen Vogel.

But diplomats said the strongly worded attack on the chancellor, in the middle of an election campaign, was almost certain to be interpreted in the West German press as a firm Kremlin endorsement of the SPD candidate.

After his meeting with Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in Moscow last month, Mr. Vogel was dubbed "Andropov's candidate" by one senior CDU official. The title has been taken up by some right-wing newspapers, which argue that Mr. Vogel's defence policy would undermine NATO.

The SPD candidate recently sent a letter to President Reagan asking him to make a new offer to Moscow to limit medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe.

Marcos names incumbent premier as his successor

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Monday named Prime Minister Cesar Virata as his likely successor, affirming that his wife Imelda would not take the job.

Mr. Marcos said in an interview with reporters that the ruling party, the new society movement, had agreed to support Mr. Virata, 52, who is also finance minister.

Under the constitution, when Mr. Marcos leaves office the Philippines will be governed by a 10-member executive committee headed by the prime minister and including Mrs. Marcos.

Mr. Marcos, 65, who was re-elected for six years in 1981 after first coming to power in 1965, gave no indication in the interview that he planned to resign.

"Whoever is prime minister at the time will be supported by the

others, including the military," he said.

Mr. Virata was appointed prime minister after Mrs. Marcos, the minister of human settlements and the nation's most powerful woman, declined the nomination.

"If I leave office, the first lady will leave office," Mr. Marcos said. "But the prime minister may need help if I leave office. She has agreed to help."

He said other cabinet members also wanted to be president, among them Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Labour Minister Blas Ople.

They would all have a chance at the premiership, which is due to rotate under constitutional changes made in 1981.

Replying to a question, Mr. Marcos said he had no doubt a woman could become the nation's leader but now was not the time.

No violence in Dacca during national ceremony

DACCA (R) — Bangladesh marked the anniversary of Ekushey (martyrs day) Monday, only a week after violent clashes between police and student protesters against martial law in which five people were killed.

Tens of thousands of Bangladeshis filed past the monument and graves of four nationalist students shot by police during a demonstration in 1952 to support demands that Bengali be recognised as a national language.

The irony was not lost on some of Monday's mourners in Dacca who chanted anti-military slogans and demands for a return to democracy soon after wreath-laying

ceremonies began at midnight. Bangladesh's military ruler, Gen. Hossain Mohammad Ershad, escorted by heavily armed troops and police, laid the first of thousands of wreaths on the monument.

The emotional anniversary symbolises Bangladeshi nationalism and the birth of the secessionist struggle against the rule of what was then West Pakistan (now Pakistan).

Dacca was calm Monday, with security forces keeping a low profile. There was no evidence of extra security despite the temporary lifting of a curfew imposed last week.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Alleged Italian spy reveals details

ROME (R) — Italian newspapers have said a 33-year-old microfilm expert arrested for spying had told investigators of hiding places near Rome where he left documents for collection by Soviet agents. The reports said Azeelio Negrino, of Genoa, had given police full details of his contacts with Soviet agents, including arrangements for using the "dead letter boxes". Negrino was arrested here a week ago with what police described as highly important strategic material. They said he was on the point of handing it over to Soviet airline official Victor Pronin. Mr. Pronin, 46, Aeroflot's deputy commercial director in Rome, is also under arrest facing charges of political and military espionage. He is the first Soviet citizen to be charged with spying in Italy, which has expelled previous Soviet suspects. A police spokesman said the arrests followed a year's investigation by military intelligence.

Search for bodies continues in London

LONDON (R) — Police investigating a series of gruesome murders have filed a dozen bags with evidence—some of it apparently human remains. Officers wore face masks as they probed the walls and floors of a North London house, called the "house of horrors" by the British press since the search began 11 days ago. Victims in the case are believed to have been more than a dozen jobless, homeless young men killed over several years while the house stood vacant except for vagrants who broke in to find shelter. Until Sunday, the police had concentrated on digging up the garden behind the house and nearby waste land, where they found a number of human bones. But most of the bodies were believed to be inside the house itself, they said.

Britain remands 2 West Germans

LONDON (R) — Two West Germans wanted in connection with bomb attacks on U.S. military installations in Frankfurt were remanded in jail for a week at an extradition hearing Monday. Walther Kexel and Ulrich Tillman, described by West German police as right-wing extremists, were arrested by armed detectives last week in Poole on England's southwest coast. At Monday's three-minute hearing in a Central London court they were sent back to jail until Feb. 28 at police request. Security was tight around the hearing and the two men were handcuffed to detectives in the dock. A woman interpreter explained the proceedings to them.

Executive forced to fly aircraft

WELLINGTON (R) — A building company executive grabbed the controls of a chartered six-seater plane Monday after the pilot slumped unconscious over the controls, Chris Wells, 35, who has some flying experience, kept the twin-engine Italian Partenavia Victor plane in the air for 30 minutes until pilot Michael Young, 25, recovered. Mr. Wells and three other company executives were flying from Rotorua, in New Zealand's North Island, to Wellington for a conference when the pilot blacked out. They arrived late—in a hired car—after the pilot made an emergency landing at Palmerston north 120 kilometres from Wellington. Mrs. Barbara Wells told reporters after her husband telephoned her to say he was safe: "He said it was a bit freaky not being able to see where he was going."

Comedian Kaye in good condition

LOS ANGELES (R) — Comedian Danny Kaye was in good spirits and in stable condition after a quadruple heart bypass operation, a hospital spokeswoman said. "He is awake and alert and there are apparently no complications," the spokeswoman said. Kaye, 70, underwent the four-and-a-half-hour operation Saturday at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles, 12 days after he was admitted for tests for an irregular heart rhythm.

Mrs. Gandhi visits massacre sites in Assam

GAUHATI, India (R) — Prime Minister Indira Gandhi flew to Assam Monday to see for herself the carnage caused by frenzied tribesmen in the northeast Indian state where press reports say up to 1,000 people were massacred.

Mrs. Gandhi arrived in Assam as bodies from a week of slaughter were still being collected for burial.

More than 500 Muslim immigrants, mostly women and children, were butchered on Friday alone in the rugged Nongong district of central Assam. But press reports said as many as 1,000 people were slaughtered by tribesmen using axes, spears, bows and arrows and old rifles.

Extra troops have been sent into the area where hundreds of wounded and homeless are being

tended in special relief camps. The killings that left a trail of blacked and headless corpses and 16 blazing villages in the Nongong district were carried out during a week-long election for a 126-seat local assembly.

The final day of polling was taking place in a few constituencies Monday.

The massacre was concentrated around the small township of Nellie, about 70 kilometres east of Assam's capital, Gauhati. Thousands of people, many dressed in rags, have been made homeless in the carnage and a series of relief camps have been set up for them.

About 200 of the more seriously wounded, many suffering from knife and axe wounds, have been moved to the regional centre

of Nongong town where special hospitals have been organised.

The villagers were attacked by the tribesmen because they were predominantly Muslim immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh. Militant local Assamese Hindus and the tribals believe immigrants have taken over valuable farm land and jobs.

They want the Bengali-speaking migrants deported and have called for a boycott of the poll in protest against the inclusion of large numbers of the outsiders on electoral rolls.

As Mrs. Gandhi visits the state Monday, the Upper House of India's Parliament was due to hold a special debate on the bloodshed. The lower house will discuss the situation Tuesday.

PTI said Home (Interior) Min-

ister P.C. Sethi, who visited the Nellie area Sunday, would make a statement in Parliament.

Indian opposition parties boycotted the opening of Parliament on Friday to protest against the government's handling of Assam.

Mrs. Gandhi called the elections after talks between the government and Assamese political and student groups on the intractable immigrant issue broke down.

Medical supplies for the wounded were being flown from Delhi as the army moved into the region to prevent possible reprisals. The government had previously avoided deploying the army while elections were on and had brought in thousands of para-military police to help with the poll.

Australian charged with arson in Victoria state

MELBOURNE (R) — A man was charged Monday with starting bush fires as fire fighters kept under control the huge blazes which killed 71 people in southern Australia.

The man, John Jackel, 34, was accused of lighting fires Sunday night at Frankston about 40 kilometres south of Melbourne, capital of Victoria.

He was arrested as fire chiefs looked for evidence that arsonists started fires last Wednesday which gutted 3,000 homes in Victoria and the neighbouring state of South Australia.

Mr. Jackel, the second person arrested on arson charges since

the blaze, was freed on bail pending a further court hearing on May 5. A 19-year-old youth has been remanded in custody by Adelaide magistrates accused of setting fire to scrubland near the city last Wednesday.

The fires are now under control in the two states, where more than 300,000 sheep and cattle perished in pastures made tinder dry by the worst drought in Australia's history.

The primary school in the devastated township of Cockatoo on the outskirts of Melbourne reopened Monday for the first time since flames roared through the area, killing 29 people.

Currency offence added to list against Nkomo

HARARE (R) — Zimbabwe opposition leader Joshua Nkomo said Monday the police had told him he might be prosecuted under the country's law and order maintenance laws and for an alleged currency offence.

Mr. Nkomo, who was prevented from leaving the country on Saturday, told Reuters from his home in Bulawayo that during a two-hour session at the city's police headquarters Monday he had made "two or three" statements after being warned and cautioned.

Mr. Nkomo said he had been asked to make the statements, relating to notes he had made about the security situation in his home province of Matabeleland, to assist police inquiries.

"It is something to do with bringing the police and army into dispute," he said.

He said he was also suspected of trying to export 300 Zimbabwe dollars (about the same in U.S. dollars) illegally.

But he had not been charged with any offence, he said.

Legal sources said statements made after being warned and cautioned were the first stage in a police investigation when a suspect was invited to answer allegations. No government comment was immediately available on Monday's events.

Mr. Nkomo has accused government forces, particularly the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, of massacres, rape and looting in Matabeleland while on anti-rebel operations.

The 65-year-old leader of the Matabeleland-based ZAPU Party said that when he was detained at Bulawayo airport on Saturday he was carrying notes on the situation

which he had made for a recent speech in parliament.

He also had with him a document about the situation in the uneasy province that he said he had intended discussing with the prime minister, he said.

He said he had not intended to take them abroad but that his wife had packed them for him by mistake.

He said the 300 Zimbabwe dollars had been intended for his family while he was away, but he had forgotten about the money.

Zimbabwe's minister of state for security, Mr. Emmerson Mnangagwa, told the national news agency ZIANA Sunday that Mr. Nkomo had been detained because he had tried to leave for South Africa under a false name.

Mr. Nkomo has angrily denied this, saying he was only due to pass through Johannesburg on his way to a World Peace Council conference in Czechoslovakia. He insisted his passport and ticket were in his correct name.

"I will leave in a day or two," he declared. "This is my right under the constitution. They can send me to jail if they like."

A World Peace Council spokesman in Prague contacted by telephone from Vienna confirmed that Mr. Nkomo had been due to take part in a meeting of its deputy-chairmen which began there Monday.

Asked if he had heard of Mr. Nkomo's detention at Bulawayo airport last Saturday the spokesman said: "We do not yet have enough details to adopt an attitude to Mr. Nkomo's case though we may issue a statement later."

Ben Bella: 'I don't trust the French any more'

NEW YORK (R) — Former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella was quoted Monday as saying Communism is on the wane in the Third World, with present-day Algeria "a dreadful caricature of what might have been."

Interviewed in Switzerland by Newsweek magazine, Mr. Ben Bella said Algeria and other Islamic countries were wrong to blindly copy examples of Western development.

He added: "At the same time I don't think Communism is on the march anywhere in the Third World. On the contrary, it's on the wane. It doesn't have the answers to Third World problems."

"It has shown itself in an unfavourable light recently. What happened in Poland is a disgrace and the Soviets are bogged down in Afghanistan."

Mr. Ben Bella, overthrown in a military coup in 1965, said more Algerians were returning home today than emigrating. "Today's Algeria is one of despair."

He said there were certain similarities with the Shah's Iran — "the same neglect of agriculture, the same prestige investments that don't contribute to people's well-being, the same corruption at all levels, including the top."

Mr. Ben Bella was held under house arrest in Algeria for 15 years until he was freed in 1980 and later moved to France.

He recently went to Switzerland, where Newsweek said he was in hiding after French police raided his home near Paris, expelling three of his bodyguards.

Mr. Ben Bella repeated earlier statements that the French were deliberately trying to get him to leave.

"A member of the French foreign minister's staff warned me to be more discreet — as did officials from the prime minister's office and the interior ministry," he said.

"I'm in no hurry to return to France. While I have friends in the (ruling) French Socialist Party, I don't trust the French any more."

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN

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DEAR MR. GOREN

Q.—My partners tell me that, as responder, I must show a major suit regardless of its quality. However, your books state that a biddable suit should be as good as Q-J-10-9. Whose advice do I follow?—R. Simon, Cherry Hill, Pa.

(This question has been awarded the weekly prize.) A.—When it comes to opening the bidding, you should not bid a major suit unless it is at least as good as the suit shown in your question. However, you might have to open a minor suit that is considerably weaker than that. For example, suppose that you hold:

♠Axx ♣xxx ♦Jxxx ♣Ax

You have an opening bid in any system in the world. However, your major suit is not biddable, and your minor is even worse. If you were playing a weak no trump, that would be the ideal opening bid. But since most people require at least 15 to 16 points to open one no trump, that also is ruled out.

You have to tell a white lie somewhere, and the solution is to lower your suit requirement in the minor rather than the major. Partner knows that minor-suit games are unattractive—who wants to contract for eleven tricks when nine could be available in no trump, or ten in a major? As a result, he will strain to find a bid other than a raise if you open one club or one diamond, especially if he has only three-card support for your suit.

The same restriction on a biddable suit does not hold true when you are responder.

Suppose that partner opens one diamond and you hold:

♠Qx ♦Jxxx ♣Axx ♦Kxxx

If you are going to suppress a four-card major suit, your only good bid is a jump to two no trump, despite your shaky spade holding. Now if opener has the hand shown above, he will surely raise to three no trump. You will have to do some mighty fancy guessing to make that contract.

You have missed your 4-4 heart fit! Note that four hearts has far more reasonable play. The opponents might even lead a trump to cut down your ruffing power, which will make your contract a cinch if hearts are 3-2. On any other lead, you still have several chances to collect ten tricks.

The only way to reach a heart contract is to respond one heart to partner's one diamond opening bid, even though your suit doesn't quite measure up to the criteria of a biddable suit. You have to be flexible in this game.

Q.—In a recent column you described an opening bid of four hearts as being preemptive. I thought that only three-level bids were preemptive.—A. Kelly, Houston, Texas

A.—The "Official Encyclopedia of Bridge" describes a preemptive bid as follows: "An opening bid of three or more (my emphasis) with a hand containing a long suit and limited high-card strength. The bid is usually defensive in purpose. The preemptive bidder hopes that opponents with strong hands will find it difficult to bid accurately when the auction has started at a high level."